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An English translation of

Relations entre le Maroc et la Turquie dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle et le début du XVIIe siècle (1554-1616)

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RELATIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND TURKEY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XVI CENTURY AND THE EARLY XVII CENTURY (1554-1616)

By Chantal de la Verrone

In 1516 the Turks occupied Algiers, in 1529 Kheîr ed-Dîn drove the Spaniards of Penôn from the city. In 1551 these same Turks were in Tlemcen. The power of the Ottoman Porte stopped at the Tafna; beyond towards the west, a change of dynasty took place and the last Banû Wattâsid gave way to the Sa'dien sharifs from the south. In 1549, the Sa'dien Mûlay Moh'ammed had occupied the entire region from Fez to Oujda,(1) but despite the support of the powerful tribe of Banû Râchid, he could not hold Tlemcen.

Newcomers to North Africa, the Turks and the Sa'dian Sharifs were to clash from the middle of the 16th century, and the Sublime Porte sought to dominate the only Maghreb country that escaped its tutelage, Morocco.

From 1549, the sharif had Turks in his personal guard(2) or in his army(3) and his navy.(4) His rival, the last Wattâssid, also had them close to him,(5) since the Pasha of Algiers, Çâlah 'Raïs had helped him to take back his capital and supported him against the Sa'dien. Once Fez was reconquered (23 September 1554), the sharif will keep the guard of Abû H'asûn near him.(6) Were all these Turks emissaries of the Sublime Porte? This is plausible, at least for some of them.

As soon as the sharif had definitively eliminated the Wattasids and he was installed in Fez, he received an envoy from Sultan Sulaiman II, who, reminding him of the help given by Çâlah 'Raïs to Abu H'asûn, made him understand that the Sublime Porte would grant him the same protection if the new ruler of Morocco recognized him as his overlord,(7) as the practical Wattasid had done for a moment.(8) The Sharif's response was clear: "*Give your sultan salvation... And tell him this: the Sultan of the Maghreb can only compete with you for the sake of Egypt*."(9) Opposite the sultan of the East, Mûlay Moh'ammed called himself the sultan of the West.

Ah'med el-Wattâsî and Abu H'asûn had left sons who had placed themselves under the protection of the Pasha of Algiers in the hope that he would drive out the Sa'dien. The Turkish intrigues against the new Maghrebian power were not going to cease and, in 1557, a member of the Turkish guard of the sharif, Çâlah 'el-Kiahya, spy of the new pasha of Algiers, Hasan ben Kheîr ed-Dîn, assassinated Mûlay Moh'ammed ech-Cheîkh on October 23rd,(10) and the head of the sharif was carried to Constantinople.(11)

The successor of the deceased Sharif was his youngest son, Mûlay 'Abd Allah el-Ghâlib. Of course his brothers did not agree to be ousted, and this was an opportunity for the Turks to interfere once again in Moroccan affairs. At the end of the following year, one of these princes, 'Abd el-Mûmen, wanted to seize Fez; but in the face of resistance from the caïd of the city he left for Tlemcen to ask for the support of the Turks.(12) His elder brother, 'Abd el-Malek had fled in 1557, first to Algiers and then to Constantinople to ask the Sultan for help which would enable him to regain the Moroccan throne.(13) From Tlemcen 'Abd el-Mûmen went to Algiers where the Pasha H'asan welcomed him, offered him his daughter in marriage and appointed him governor of Tlemcen:(14) the Porte

continued to meddle in Moroccan affairs by supporting the two rebellious sharifs against their reigning brother. This policy counterbalanced the defeat that Mûlay'Abd Allah had inflicted on the Turks on Wadi Leben in the spring of 1558.(15) In Morocco it was rumored that a large squadron had left Constantinople in the direction of Oran to invade the country.(16) These same threats were repeated in the following years, but in 1563, after a siege of more than a month before Oran and Mers el-Kebîr, the Turks were forced to leave when confronted with the sizeable fleet from Spain.(17)

During the reign of Sultan Selîm II (r. 1566-1574), who had succeeded his father Sulaîmân II (r. 1520-1566), it does not seem that there was the slightest attempt at an official agreement between the sovereigns of Turkey and Morocco. Sharif Mûlay Abd Allah el-Ghâlib certainly had skirmishes with the Pasha of Algiers and the Spanish outposts, but his reign was relatively peaceful. As for Abd el-Malek, he had continued to intrigue in Constantinople; he had participated in the battle of Lepanto where the Spaniards had captured him, and was then sent to Oran. Released, he had joined the Turks in Algiers, then Eulj 'Alî in Constantinople, and in 1572 he planned to go to Spain to obtain the support of Philip II. It should be noted that this prince, while being on good terms with the Ottoman sultan, informed the Catholic King about what was happening in the Ottoman capital. He mainly resided in Algiers where he married the daughter of the renegade Hâggî Morato. At the end of the year 1572, the latter went to Fez as the pasha's ambassador to conclude an alliance in the event of an attack by the Christians against Algiers, but the sharif sent him away without receiving him.(18) On 22 January 1574, 'Abd Allah died and his son Mh'ammed succeeded him.(19)

Abd el-Malek had finally obtained from Selîm II a fleet sent to help him recover the kingdoms he thought were his, when the death of Sultan Selim II on 12 December 1574 postponed this project.(20) This death followed that of Mûlay Abd Allah, however during the two years of the reign of Mûlay Mh'ammed, the Turks continued to give their support to 'Abd el-Malek who did not recognize his nephew as sovereign of the kingdoms of Fez and Marrakech.

What was the attitude of this prince towards the Porte? Before his death, Selîm II had ordered him to follow him in his expedition against La Goulette and Tunis, and he had complied.(21) It is true that he received from the Sultan the annual rent on Tlemcen.(22) But, as soon as he had recovered his kingdoms with the support of the Pasha of Algiers, Rabad'ân Pasha, and 8 to 10,000 Turkish soldiers in addition to his supporters,(23) he made peace proposals to Spain,(24) because he must have known that Ottoman aid was not disinterested. The presence of Turkish troops near Fez also worried Philip II and his government so much that an alliance with one or the other of the sharifs was discussed at the King's Council on 12 May 1576.(25)

The situation in Morocco in the summer of 1576, after the victory of Abd el-Malek at Khandaq er-Rîh'ân (July), was in many ways similar to that which accompanied Abû H'asûn's return to Fez in 1554. The new sovereign had seized power thanks to the Turks, and it was necessary for him now while taking this into account, to try to regain his independence vis-à-vis the Ottoman power.

On the one hand, Abd el-Malek continued to seek the help of the Turkish galleys,(26) and he sent a present to the Grand Sultan;(27) on the other, from 1572, as we have seen, he

was seeking to obtain the alliance of the Spaniards, enemies of the Turks, and in the draft treaties that he tried to conclude with Philip II, it was clearly specified that the sharif would have no Turks in his administration and that he would not attack the Catholic King even if the Sublime Porte asked him to; moreover, he would report to Philip II any planned acts of hostilities planned by the Sultan; the contracting parties would not lend any support to the Ottomans one against the other, and would even help each other against the latter if necessary (April-May 1577).(28) Captain Cabrette, former agent of Mûlay Abd el-Malek, was to be responsible for carrying out these negotiations,(29) but it was Captain Francisco Zuniga who left for Morocco.(30)

The year 1577 saw diplomatic relations intensify between Morocco and Spain, it also saw the resumption of exchanges of ambassadors between the Porte and the government of Mûlay Abd el-Malek; in March 1577 a representative of Sharif was in Algiers,(31) in May an ambassador of the Pasha arrived in Marrakech to inform the Sharif of the movements of the Ottoman fleet,(32) while at the same time an official ambassador of Abd el-Mâlek, Mûsâ ben 'Abd en-Nabî, was in Constantinople.(33) On November 25 of the same year the capital of southern Morocco received an envoy from H'asan Pasha who brought the sharif a letter from his master: the latter begged the king of Morocco to prevent an alliance between Turkey and Spain. If, however, this peace was concluded, the pasha asked the sharif to allow his ships the right to take refuge in Larache and Salé. This attitude of H'asan Pasha is curious to say the least. Was he trying to make himself independent from the Porte? It seems that in a Turkish-Spanish alliance, he [Sultan Murad III] agreed to oppose an Algerian-Moroccan alliance. The Sa'dien brought his wife and son who had stayed there from Algiers, and postponed the departure of the ambassador of the Sultan, Selîm ej-Ja'far, who was in Marrakech,(34) but we do not know the object of the mission with which he was charged.

The following year, on the eve of the battle of el-Qçar el-Kebîr (4 August 1578), where he was to be killed, Abd el-Malek reminded the king of Portugal, Sebastien I, that he was the friend of the Ottoman sultan.(35)

The new ruler of Morocco, Mûlay Ah'med el-Mançûr, was brought to power by the simultaneous deaths of his brother and his nephew, Mûlay Mh'ammed. He followed the policy of Abd el-Mâlek; he wanted the Spanish alliance and he wished to remain on good terms with the Porte without falling under his domination, however. This promised to be difficult because the successor of Selîm, Murâd III (r. 1574-1595), had received the Moroccan ambassador responsible for informing him of the accession to the throne of Mûlay Ah'med in a very contemptuous manner.(36) This attitude did not prevent the sharif from receiving both the ambassador of Philip II, D. Pedro Venegas of Cordoba, and that of the Grand Sultan in 1579. The same year three Portuguese ambassadors and one English also came to Marrakech.

The Ottoman ambassador was lodged in the *qaçbat* and offered the sharif the customary presents. His mission was to take from Mûlay Ah'med the north of Morocco for the son of 'Abd el-Malek, Mûlay Isma'îl. His nephew was in Algiers; he also wanted his help in retaking Oran from the Spaniards.(37) Rabad'ân Pasha was appointed governor of Tlemcen and had to prevent a Hispano-Moroccan alliance (the latter did not join his command).(38) The hidden purpose of the Porte was indeed to undermine the power of the Sa'dien and not to recognize him as an equal while isolating him from the northern

Mediterranean; and if the two kingdoms of Fez and Marrakech belonged to two different rulers, the Sublime Porte could play without fear of his influence on this extreme part of the Maghreb. It should be noted that the sharif immediately rejected the claims of the Sultan and, when the arrival of the representatives of Spain was announced, the Turkish ambassadors were asked to leave and take the road to the east without having obtained what they had come.(39) Throughout his reign, the Moroccan sovereign will thus seek to safeguard his independence, swaying between Spaniards and Ottomans.

At that time a truce was negotiated in Constantinople between Spain and Turkey by Count Marigliani, Ambassador of Philip II. The Capitan-Pasha Eulj Alî was preparing an expedition against Morocco, the enemy to be slaughtered, for trying to ally with Christians.(40)

Despite the embassy of 1579, relations between the two sovereigns Muslims were then rather tense. But, in August 1580, Mûlay Ah'med received two letters from Murâd III, the son of Selîm II. Philippe II had inherited the throne of Lisbon following the death of the king-cardinal; Portugal was occupied by Spanish troops; and one head held two Iberian crowns. The peril represented by the union of these two kingdoms caused the Sultan of Turkey to propose an alliance with the sharif; he would send 300 galleys and troops to help the sharif conquer Spain and, to seal this agreement, he offered one of his daughters in marriage.

In these two missives Murâd gave the Moroccan only the titles of *h'âkim* and *emir* of Marrakech and Fez; and he was careful to point out to his correspondent that he himself was the Caliph of God, and that he would protect him against the tyrant of Castile. A missive from the sharif had reached Constantinople between these two letters, the contents of which we do not know. He must have sought to flatter Murâd, because the second of the two letters from Murâd is written as if the letter was from a suzerain to his vassal. To the sultan the sharif was certainly a descendant of the Prophet and was entitled to all his respect, but he was the Caliph, and he alone.(41)

As for Mûlay Ah'med, he maintained an ongoing correspondence with Philip II who was his closest neighbor;(42) but when the Catholic King asked him for the town of Larache, Ah'med replied that he would refer the matter to the Grand Sultan.(43)

In 1581, the exchange of letters having had to reconcile the Sharifian and Ottoman sovereigns, Mûlay Ah'med sent an embassy to Constantinople led by 'Ali ben Wadda el-Ghamrî, accompanied by the secretary Abû-l-'Abbâs ben' Alî el- Hawzali, and in 1582 a Turkish embassy was in Morocco for peace to be signed between the two Muslim powers. When he left, two Moroccan ambassadors accompanied him to confirm this agreement, and from that date we saw each year a representative of the Sa'dien in Constantinople.(44)

However, this alliance constituted a threat for Morocco, since the sultan considered the sharif as a simple emir. Mûlay Ah'med did not neglect his Spanish alliance and promised Larache to Philippe II, while being careful not to exceed the promises. These promises greatly worried the Queen of England, since she had intrigued with the Grand Sultan for it to prevent Spain from gaining a foothold on the Atlantic coast of Morocco,(45) which would have been a threat to its ships. Did English diplomacy play a role in Constantinople? Anyway, in 1584 Murâd had H'asan Pasha, beglierbey of Algiers, sent

presents to Mûlay Ah'med, in order to encourage him to refuse Larache to the Spanish,(46) and on that same date, the capitan-pasha Eulj' Alî wanted to go to Morocco to remove the sharif from the influence of his Hispanophile advisers and obtain from him for the Grand Sultan a gift more important than the usual presents.(47)

Two years later, Queen Elizabeth was so afraid of a Spanish establishment in Larache that she sent an agent to Fez to work with the Turkish envoy, then in Morocco, to shield Larache from Castilian greed; she even wished it was the Turk who occupied the city!(48) And to oppose Spain, she obtained assurances that Murad III would intervene with the sharif so that the Portuguese prince, D. Christovao, then hostage in Morocco, was returned to his father, the pretender to the throne of Portugal, D. Antonio, prior of Crato, or sent to Constantinople. Finally, the latter ends up winning over England.(49)

In March 1589, a Turkish ambassador was in Morocco, and the same month, on the 18th, Abû-1-H'asan Alî ben Mohammed et-Tamgrûtî, representative of the sharif, left for Turkey with his secretary, Sidî Mohammed ben 'Alî el-Fichtâlî. The object of this embassy is unknown, apart from the gift intended for the sultan. On the other hand, et-Tamgrûtî left us a detailed account of his trip; he returned to Marrakech on 6 January 1591, accompanied by two Turkish envoys, carrying presents for Mûlay Ah'med.(50)

The attitude of the Sa'dien towards the Caliph was by no means that of a vassal subject to his suzerain, which explains why Murad III continued to support the claims of Mûlay Isma'ïl, son of Abd el-Malek , the deceased sharif, to Morocco; and to give orders to Ah'med, to which the latter paid no attention. In 1590, Murâd went so far as to ask the sharif to endow his nephew Isma'ïl, and to give him the kingdom of Fez, as his father had wished.(51) The former Pasha of Algiers, H'asan, appointed capitan-pasha in 1588, had married the widow of Abd el-Malek, mother of Prince Ismâ'ïl. He had become the bitter enemy of the reigning sharif, and it was he who advised the sultan to support his son-in-law's claims. He even went so far as to "remind" the Grand Turk that the sharif had failed to pay a so-called tribute of vassalage to the Porte for three years: he estimated this tribute at 10,000 ducats per year, deliberately confusing tribute and gift, the sharif freely sending only donations to the Caliph of the Orient.(52)

During the last years of the reign of Ahmed el-Mançûr, relations between Morocco and Turkey appear to have been peaceful. Murâd III was succeeded his son Mohammed III (r. 1595-1603) who was much more occupied with fighting against Austria than trying to settle in the western Mediterranean. Ambassadors were regularly exchanged between the two countries, and the representatives of Morocco sometimes went to Constantinople aboard the Levant Company ships.(53)

In 1603, el-Mançur and Mohammed III died four months apart: Mûlay Ah'med had died on August 24th and a letter sent to him by the Grand Sultan by a *chaouch* was never delivered to him.(54)

Mohammed III succeeded Ah'med I, and in Morocco began the struggle for power between the sons of el-Mançûr. As for the pretender Ismâ'ïl, he was still with the Turks; in November 1604 he was in Zante with the Pasha of Algiers.(55)

An English adventurer, Anthony Sherley, seen in Persia and Constantinople in 1599, in Venice in 1603, in Prague in 1605, landed in Safi on October 2nd of that same year, in

order to advise the reigning sharif to attack the Turks of Algiers. After several audiences with Mûlay Abu Fârès, then reigning in Marrakech (1606), he obtained no result.(56) The previous year the sharif had sent an ambassador to Constantinople with a present of 300,000 ounces of gold.(57) He was following the paternal tradition and entertained no thought of attacking his powerful neighbor. Maintaining his throne was then his main concern.

During the struggles between the two brothers Mûlay Mohammed ech-Cheîkh and Mûlay Zidân, there was no longer any question of diplomatic relations with Turkey.

It was not until 1613, Mohammed ech-Cheîkh having been eliminated, that the Porte tried to resume the exchanges of ambassadors. On 2 December 1613, the Vizier Khalîl Pasha, Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet, wrote to Mûlay Zidân asking him to continue the tradition of his predecessors: he took care to give the Sultan the title of Majesty, and to reserve for the sharif that of *Highness*, trying to show once again Morocco's dependence on Turkey, imaginary dependence as we have seen. He even went so far as to advise the sharif that the Dutch were friends of the Grand Sultan, and that as a result, they would help the Sa'dien.(58) The following year, Mûlay Zidân wanted to respond to the Porte: his ambassadors embarked on the English vessel *the Concorde*, but conveyed by the Dutch to Salé, they gave up reaching their goal.(59)

It was not until December 1616, when Mûlay Zidân was the sole reigning sovereign in Morocco, that normal relations with the Ottoman Empire were resumed.(60) The attempts of Turkish influence on Morocco had failed and the sovereign of the latter country remained independent, the moral heirs to the Caliphs of Cordoba, in opposition to the Caliph of the East.

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ENDNOTES

(1) *Les Sources inédites de l'Histoire du Maroc*, *1st série*, Espagne, 1. 1, p. 269.

(2) *Ibid*. p. 148 et p. 153.

(3) *Ibid*. p. 167-168, p. 274 et p. 338.

(4) *Ibid*., p. 230.

(5) *Ibid*., p. 172(1554).

(6) *Ibid*., France, t. I, p. 295 et n. 5 (d'après Diego de Torres, *Relation de l'origine et succez des Chérifs*. Paris, 1636, p. 374 et suiv.). Voir aussi La "*Chronique anonyme de la dynastie sa'dienne*", éd. Colin, Rabat 1934, p. 50 et trad. Fagnan, dans Extraits relatifs au Maghreb, Alger, 1924, p. 380.

(7) *La Chronique anonyme*. . . p. 26, et trad. Fagnan, p. 381.

(8) *Les Sources Inédites*.. . , *1st série*, Espagne, t. II, p. 152 et p. 158.

(9) *La Chronique anonyme*. . . , p. 27, et trad. Fagnan, p. 381.

(10) *Les Sources Inédites*.. . *1st série*, France, 1. 1, p. 295, n. 5, et Espagne, t. II, p. 431 et n. 3 (d'après les auteurs arabes et les chroniques chrétiennes).

(11) *La Chronique anonyme*. . . , p. 28, et trad. Fagnan, p. 382.

(12) *Les Sources Inédites* . . . , *1st série*, Espagne, t. II, p. 471 et n. 1.

(13) *Ibid*., France, t. I, p. 361, n. 1.

(14) *Ibid*., Index, des t. I-V et Généalogie des princes de la dynasties saadienne, n° 12.

(15) *Ibid*., Espagne, t. II, p. 446-447 (2-6 avril).

(16) *Ibid*., Portugal, t. V, p. 73.

(17) *Ibid*., Espagne, t. III, p. 27-28, et Baltasar de Morales, "Dialogo de las guerras de Oran" dans *Libros raros y curiosos*, t. XV, 1881, p. 375.

(18) *Les Sources Inédites*.. , *1st série* Espagne, t. III, p. 160-165, et p. 184-185.

(19) *Ibid*., p. 187 et n. 1.

(20) *Ibid*., Angleterre, 1. 1, p. 153-157.

(21) *Ibid*., Espagne, t. III, p. 189 et n. 5.

(22) *Ibid*., p. 209.

(23) *Ibid*., p. 216, et France, t. I, p. 350 et p. 352.

(24) *Ibid*., Espagne, t. III, p. 213.

(25) *Ibid*., p. 234, n. 1.

(26) *Ibid*., p. 242.

(27) *Ibid*., p. 259 et p. 261.

(28) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t. I, p. 208 et p. 216-218. Les frères Corso, conseillers de Philippe II et de Mûlay'Abd el-Malek, voulaient inciter le chérif à chasser les Turcs du Maroc et à s'allier avec l'Espagne pour conquérir Alger (*ibid*., p. 259).

(29) *Ibid*., Espagne t. III, p. 292 et suiv.

(30) *Ibid*. France, t. I, p. 350.

(31) *Ibid*., p. 357.

(32) *Ibid*., Espagne, t. III, p. 313.

(33) *Ibid*., France, t. I, p. 359-366.

(34) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t. II, p. 270-276.

(35) *Ibid*., France, t. I, p. 386-390.

(36) El-Oufrâni (Mohammed es-Seghir), *Nozhet El-hâdi, Histoire de la Dynastie saadienne au Maroc (1511-1670)*, trad. Houdas, Paris, 1889, p. 145.

(37) Se reporter à notre article "Menaces que font peser les Turcs sur le Maroc après la bataille des Trois Rois" dans *Atti délia Semana Maghrïbina,* Cagliari, 22-25 maggio 1969, Milano, 1970, p. 180.

(38) *Les Sources Inédites*. . ., 1°* série, France, t. I, p. 352, n. 1.

(39) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t. I, p. 376.

(40) *Ibid*., France, t. II, p. 67-68.

(41) *Biblioteca National de Madrid.-Manuscrites* n° 7453, fol. 22 r°-27 v°.- Copies arabes contemporaines. Ces deux lettres ont été publiées avec leur traduction espagnole par le P. Dario Cabanelas dans "Proyecto de alianza entre los sultanes de Marruecos y Turqufa contre Felipe II" dans *Miscelânea de Estudios arabes y hebraicos*, Granada, 1967, 6: 63-66, 70-75.

(42) *Bibl Nac*. . . , *ibid*., foL 1 r°, et suiv., et 272 r° et suiv. (foliotation inversée), et P. Dario Cabanelas "Cartas del Sultan de Marruecos Ahmad al-Mansûr a Felipe II" dans Al-Andalus, vol. XXIII, 1958, p. 19-47, "Otras cartas del sultan de Marruecos Ahmad al-Mansûr a Felipe II" dans *Miscelânea*, 1958, 7: 7-17, et "El problema de Larache en tiempos de Felipe II", dans *Miscelânea*, 1960, 9: 19-53.

(43) *Les Sources Inédites*.. . , *1st série*, France, t. III, p. 82-83.

(44) *Ibid*., p. 98-100, et El-Oufrâni, op. cit., p. 152.

(45) *Les Sources Inédites*. . ., *1st série*., Angleterre, t. I. p. 400-402.

(46) *Ibid*., France, t. II, p. 111-113.

(47) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t. I, p. 435.

(48) *Ibid*., p. 484, n. 1 (information de l'ambassadeur vénitien à Madrid).

(49) 1589: *ibid*., France, t. II, p. 200-201, et 1590 : *ibid*., Angleterre, t. II, p. 27.

(50) Le récit de cette ambassade a été publié par H. de Castries, *En-Nafhat el-Miskiya fi-s-sifarat et-Tourkiya —Relation d'une ambassade marocaine en Turquie, 1589-*

1591, par Abou-1-Hasan Ali ben Mohammed et- Tamgrouti, éd. arabe et trad, française, Paris, 1929, dans *Publications de la Section Historique du Maroc, Documents d'Histoire et de Géographie marocaines, vol I.*

(51) *Les Sources Inédites. . . , 1st série,* Angleterre, t. II, p. 27 et p. 49-50.

(52) *Ibid*., France, t. II, p. 188. H'asan Pacha resta capitan-pacha jusqu'à sa mort en 1591.

(53) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t. II, p. 189 (en 1600, la *Levant Company* s'excusait de ne pouvoir transporter les envoyés chérifiens en Turquie).

(54) *Ibid*., France, t. III, p. XXXIII-IV.

(55) *Ibid*., Angleterre, t I, p. 154, n. 2.

(56) *Ibid*., t. II, p. 275-277 et p. 359.

(57) *Ibid*., Pays-Bas, t. I, p. 89 et suiv., et p. 116, et Angleterre, t. II, p. 305 et p. 280, n. 2.